

Timeline of Massachusetts Colony History

8,000 B.C.E.



Ancestors of the Wampanoag arrive.



1620



The *Mayflower* arrives.



1675



King Philip's War begins.



1773



Colonists hold the Boston Tea Party.



1780

Massachusetts state charter is drafted.





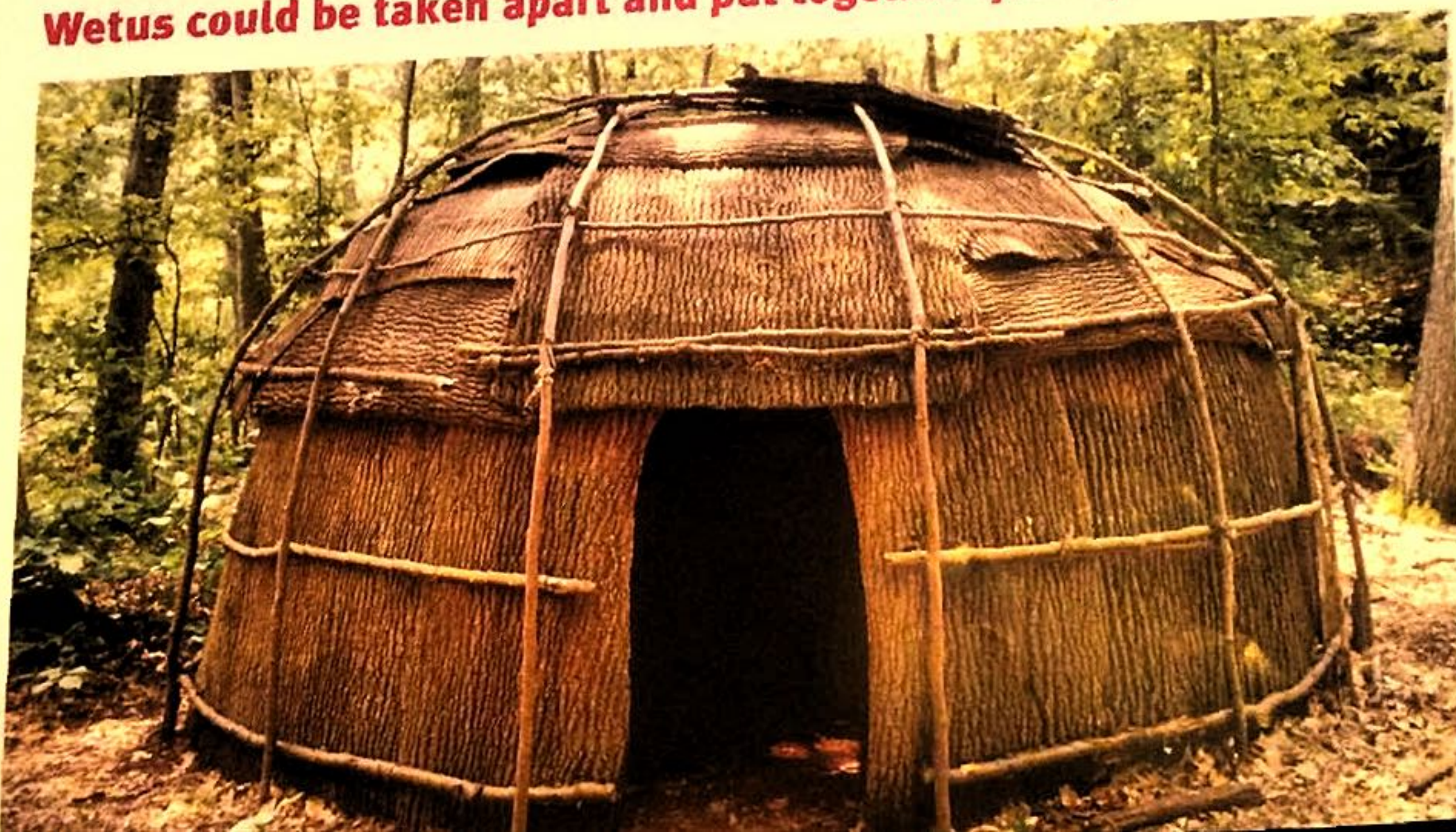
Pox, Pilgrims, and People of the First Light

The Wampanoag lived in eastern Massachusetts for thousands of years before Europeans arrived to colonize the area. Their name means “people of the first light.” They hunted, fished, and practiced **agriculture**. Their main crops were maize (corn), squash, and beans. Women tended the farms and did the sewing. They also turned animal hides into leather and fur clothing. Men hunted animals such as turkeys, deer, and bears. They also fished.

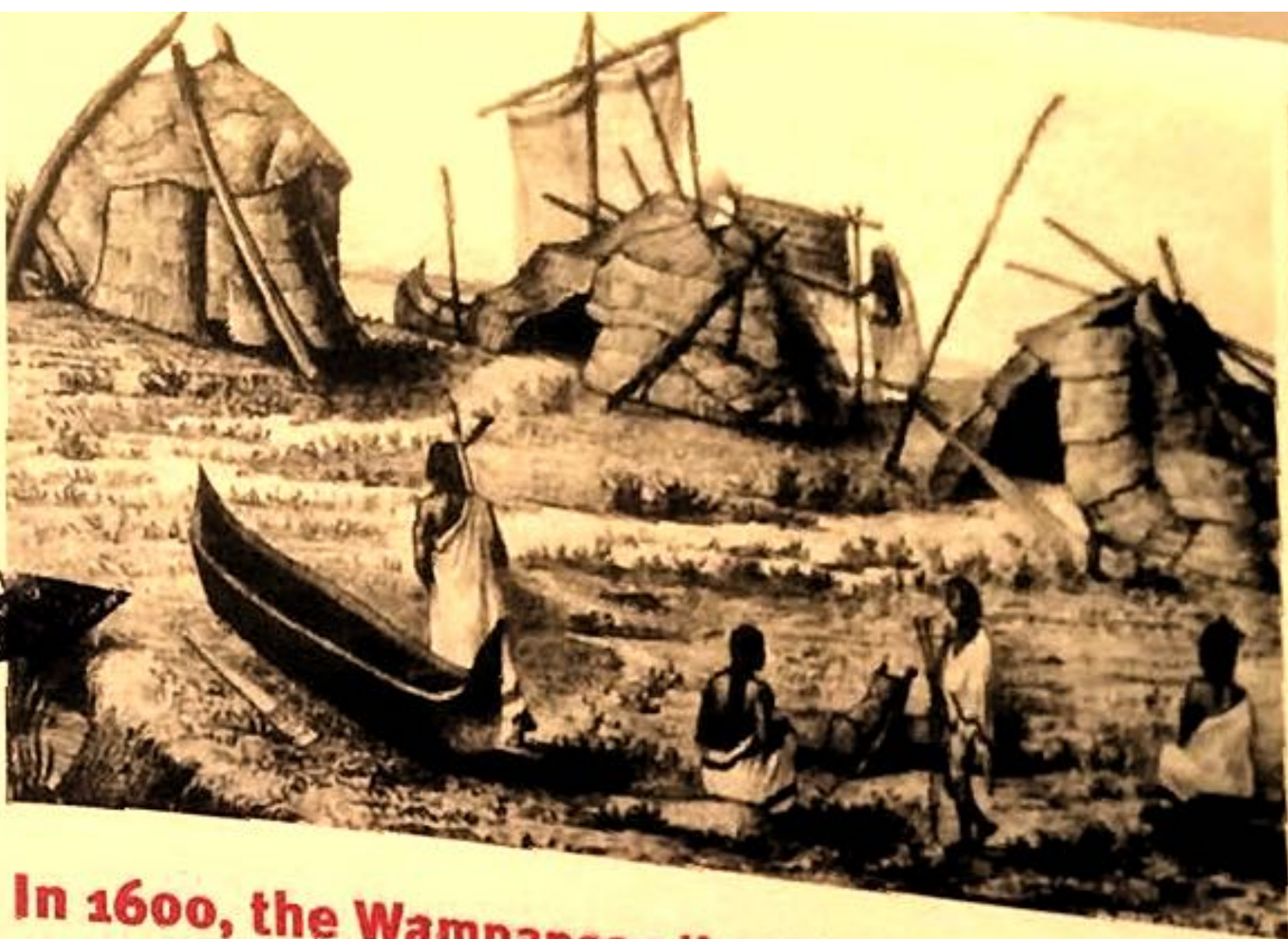
Wampanoag Life

A successful Wampanoag hunter shared his hunt with less fortunate families. That way everyone in the band survived. Children learned from their parents and older relatives. The girls learned from their mothers. Boys learned from their fathers. Wampanoag made their homes in two kinds of structures. They built rectangular longhouses and wetus, or wigwams. The Wampanoag created mats of woven cattails that they placed over a wooden frame to make the dome-shaped wetu.

Wetus could be taken apart and put together quickly.



The Wampanoag lived in different areas during the summer and the winter.



In 1600, the Wampanoag lived in about 40 villages.

The Village

The Wampanoag moved between different locations. They packed up the mats to cover a wetu in their new location. The wooden frame remained standing for use when they returned. The Wampanoag built their villages near good farmland and hunting grounds. Many bands moved to summer villages and then back to wintering areas a short distance away. The villages dotted the Massachusetts coast when European colonists arrived.



Verrazano
was killed and
eaten by cannibals
on a later voyage
to the Caribbean.

Giovanni da Verrazano and his men were the first Europeans to visit what is now Massachusetts.

Exploration by Europeans

Explorer Giovanni da Verrazano, working for France, entered the waters of present-day Rhode Island in 1524 and traded with the Wampanoag. Other European fishing boats and traders soon followed. Some of the traders kidnapped Wampanoag to take back to Europe as slaves. Slave takers raided the village of Patuxet in 1614. One of the captives was Squanto. He was a young Wampanoag training as a special warrior and adviser to Patuxet's sachem, or chief.

Diseases brought by Europeans affected the region's native peoples two years later. Possibly nine out of ten Wampanoag died. So many died that Patuxet was deserted. The fields went untended. This scene greeted the 102 passengers of the *Mayflower* in 1620. The settlers explored the area. They found fresh water but also angry Wampanoag survivors with bows and arrows. They fired their guns to chase off the Indian attackers.

The *Mayflower* arrived on land on November 21, 1620.



The Pilgrims

The settlers are known today as the Pilgrims. They had fled religious **persecution** in England. Their new colony allowed them to practice their faith as they wished. But they had no idea how to survive in the new land. Close to half the Pilgrims died during the winter. The rest barely survived on food the Wampanoag had buried years earlier and the little food they had brought with them. It took until the next spring for them to finish turning Patuxet into a Pilgrim town called New Plimoth.

The winter months were extremely difficult for the Pilgrims.



The Pilgrims
probably ate
geese and ducks
at the first
Thanksgiving.



Thanksgiving became a national holiday in the United States in 1863.

The local Wampanoag sachem was named Massasoit. He soon made contact. Massasoit brought with him a man who spoke English. Squanto had learned the language in Europe. He had returned home after acquiring his freedom. He taught the Pilgrims the Wampanoag ways of farming and survival. In the fall, the two peoples shared a feast remembered today as Thanksgiving. New Plimoth grew in the years that followed. But starting in 1630, another colony would eclipse it.



MAINE
(PART OF
MASSACHUSETTS)

ATLANTIC OCEAN

NEW HAMPSHIRE

VERMONT
(CLAIMED BY
NEW HAMPSHIRE
AND NEW YORK)

NEW YORK

Area
enlarged
Original
13 Colonies

Merrimack River

Connecticut River

Berkshire Hills

MASSACHUSETTS

CONNECTICUT

RHODE
ISLAND

WAMPANOAG

Buzzards Bay

Cape
Cod
Bay

Cape Cod

Nantucket
Sound

Martha's
Vineyard

Nant
Island




0 miles 20
0 km 20

Colonial boundaries

Long Island

The New Colony

The Puritans were another religious group that sought to worship in peace. Their **charter** from England allowed them land and self-government. More than 300 ships carrying 21,000 people arrived in New England between 1630 and 1640. Most of them were Puritans. John Winthrop was the leader of the first group. He became the first governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony and had a say in selecting Boston as the colonial capital.



Today, more than 600,000 people live in Boston.

Puritan Rules

The Puritans lived by strict rules designed to keep their minds focused on God. An elected official called the tithing man made sure people only traveled on Sunday to attend church. People who dressed in fancy clothes were fined. Activities such as dancing and horseshoes were forbidden. The Puritans even disliked play for children. They believed it led to misbehavior. Anyone who challenged the Puritans was thrown out of the colony.

Puritans strictly enforced their many rules.



Most Puritan
schools consisted
of only one room.



The Schoolhouse

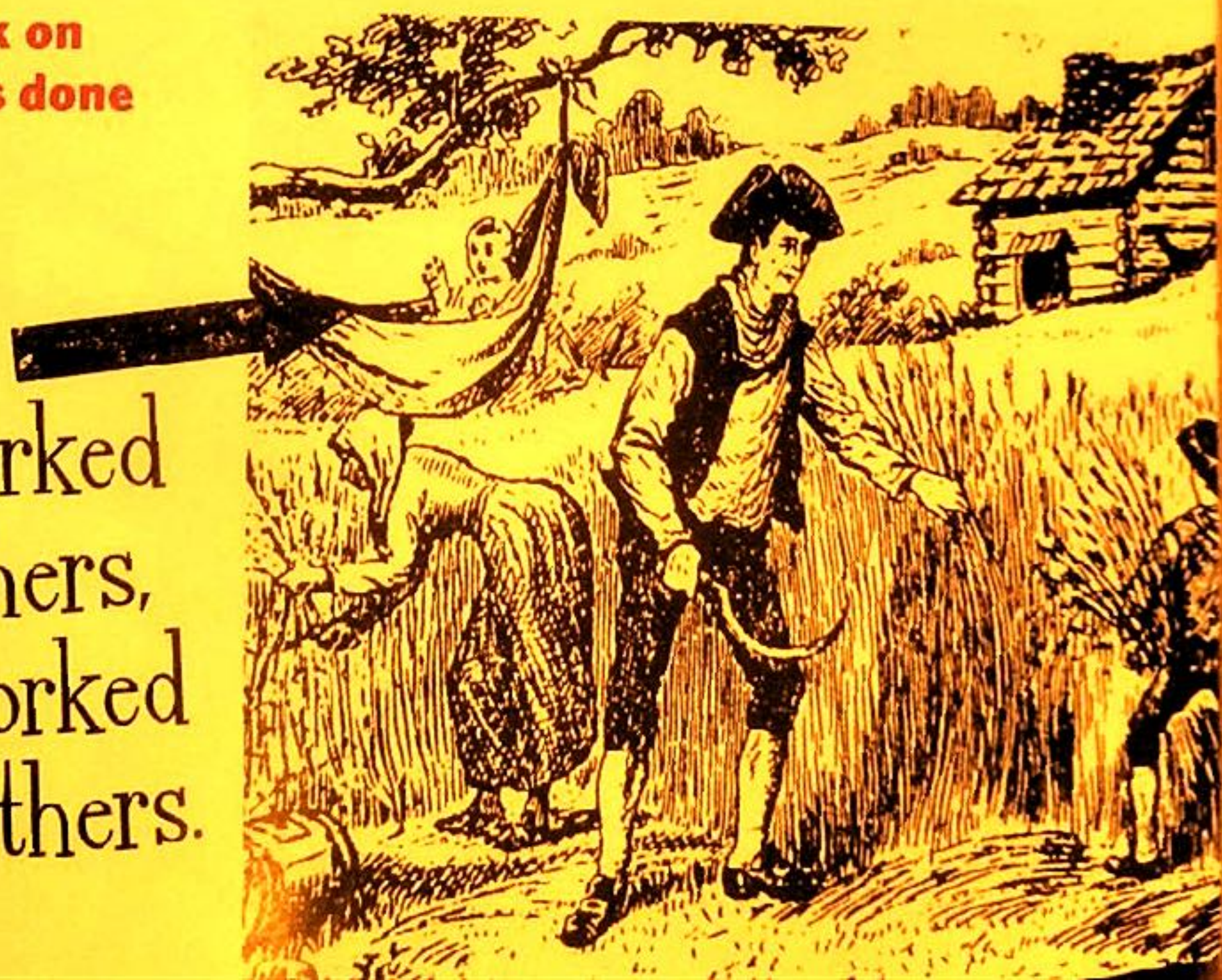
The Puritans valued learning because people needed to read to study the Bible. They passed a law in 1647 that required towns with at least 50 homes to open a schoolhouse. The cold buildings usually had a single stove for heat. Students sat on planks. Girls learned reading, writing, and a little math. Boys might be taught enough Greek and Latin to attend the colony's secondary school in Boston.

Hard Work

The Puritans divided work into specific tasks for women and men. Women cared for the home. They took charge of cooking, sewing, soap making, and gardening. Raising the children also kept women very busy. Colonial women had big families. They often had six or more children. Children helped with chores once they were old enough. These chores included fetching water from wells or streams, milking the cows, herding sheep, and baking bread.

Much of the work on family farms was done by children.

Boys often worked with their fathers, while girls worked with their mothers.



Men worked various jobs. Farming was essential to the Massachusetts **economy**. Trades (specialized jobs) became more important as towns and cities grew in the 1700s. Coopers made barrels. Cobblers made shoes. Tanners made leather. A boy wanting to work in a trade served as an **apprentice** for a period of time learning the skills. Church responsibilities often took up men's time and energy.

During colonial times, goods were made by hand.



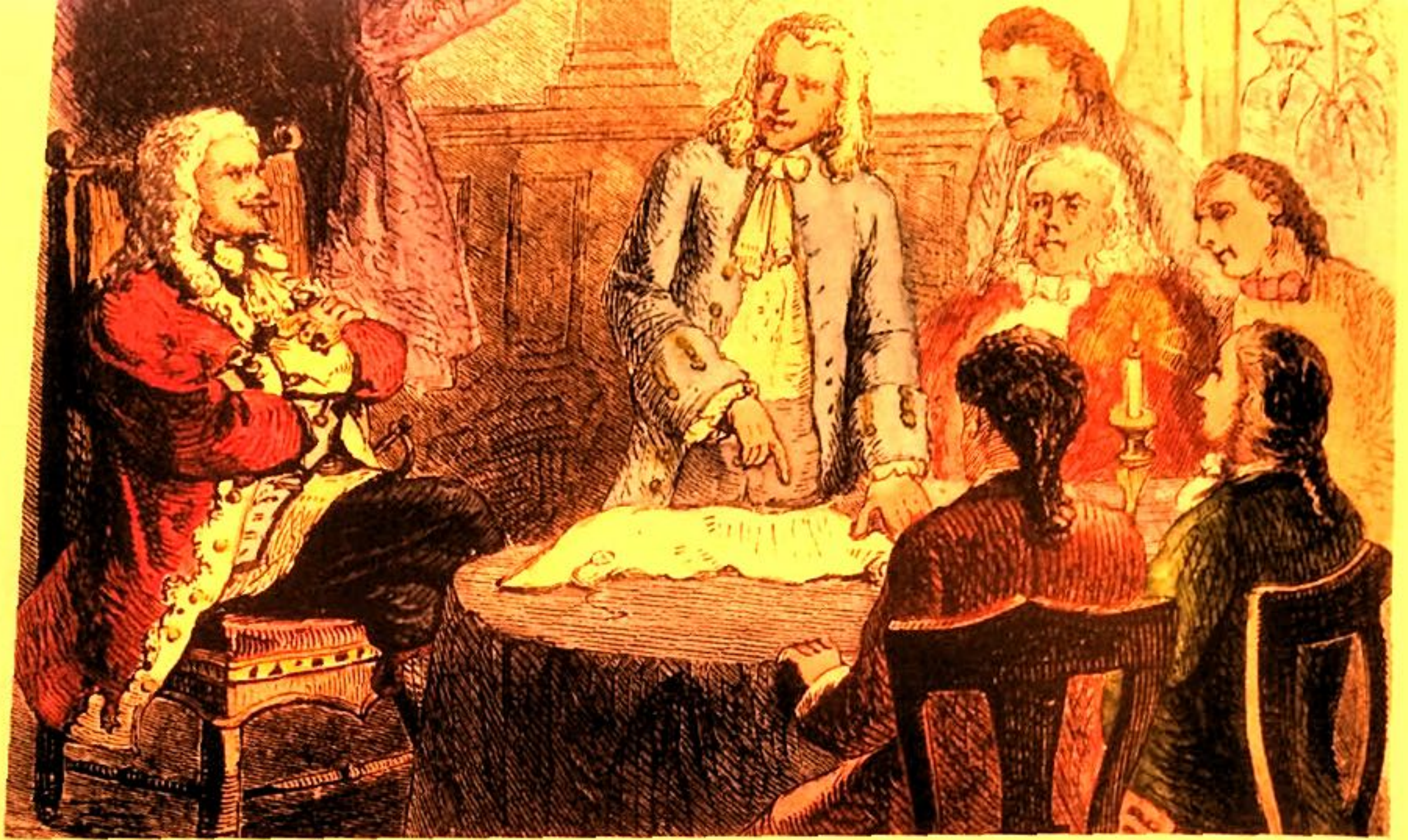
Colonists
destroyed Native
American crops
during King
Philip's War.



King Philip's War was the most violent event to occur in New England in the 17th century.

Colony at War

The Puritans didn't have the same respect for Native Americans that the Pilgrims did. They took land when they wanted it. The Puritans refused to believe that Indians had complaints worth listening to. The Native Americans began to fight back. Conflict with native peoples in King Philip's War (1675-1676) damaged or destroyed half of the 90 or so towns in New England and killed 600 settlers. More than 3,000 Native Americans died. Only 400 Wampanoag survived when the war ended.



King Charles II continued to seek ways to get money from the colonies for England.

Takeover by England

The war battered Massachusetts's economy. The colony faced an even greater challenge soon after it ended. King Charles II thought the English government should make more money from colonial furs, lumber, and other goods. England revoked the colonial charter in 1684. This took away the colony's right to govern itself. England had taken more control over the colony.

Massachusetts soon regained control of its affairs. But fear and uncertainty were in the air. Wild accusations of witchcraft took over the town of Salem. This led to the Salem witch trials in 1692. A special court had executed 20 falsely accused "witches" and put 150 people in prison by the time it all ended.

The Massachusetts governor's wife was one of the women accused of witchcraft.

Accusations of witchcraft began after a group of young girls began screaming, throwing things, and making strange sounds.

